

7-6-1921

Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1921-07-06, Shanghai, China, to Emma Mills

May-ling Soong Chiang

Follow this and additional works at: http://repository.wellesley.edu/mills_chiang

Recommended Citation

Papers of Emma DeLong Mills, MSS.2, Wellesley College Archives.

This Letter is brought to you for free and open access by the Papers of Emma DeLong Mills (MSS.2) at Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Papers of Emma DeLong Mills: May-ling Soong Chiang by an authorized administrator of Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive. For more information, please contact ir@wellesley.edu.

Letter from May-ling Soong Chiang, 1921-07-06, Shanghai, China, to Emma Mills

Transcription

30 Seymour Road
6 July, 1921

Dearest Dada:

Yours of June 5, just received: and
I am hastening to answer you, because moods
like everything else are transient and cannot
be captured by mere will. Since I returned
home from Canton, I have written you once,
but needless to say, I have actually started letters
more than half a dozen times: but each
time I became so disgusted, so disgusted
that I tere[sic] up my efforts.

I agree with you that you and I are
in the same boat as far as being self-
satisfied is concerned. As to the emptiness of
life, -- well, life is empty, there is no
gain saying that. And yet looking around
and about me, everyone I know, friends,
relatives and acquaintances all envy me
because they say I seem to have
everything good in life, everything worth
having! I have told you all this before,
and so you know how I view the
matter myself. And then also I am
forced to admit that I do seem to have [page break]
the richest life of any one of my
friends or acquaintances. Then why in the
name of common sense, am I such an
ingrate, and feel so tired of life
And feel so keenly the futility of life?

You will probably laugh at what I
am going to tell you. You know I
have tried every mode of life possible
to find happiness, or at least a panacea
from the boredom of existence, within
my environment. I have tried "Social
Service", "self-improvement", "butterflying",

in fact all the possible ways which
seemed to promise a richer, fuller life.
And I have failed!!

Now I am trying something
new; new at least for me; and so
far I have not tried it sufficiently
to tell whether the outcome will be
satisfactory, but such as it is, I
shall tell you.

You know Dada, I am not a
religious person. I am too darned
independent and pert to be meek or [page break]
humble or submissive. As you probably
know too, my sister Mrs. Kung was
even more independent than I. She
is very much keener than I, a
really brilliant woman, and very
social,-- always has been the
leading Social light. Up to two or
three years ago, she even denied the
existence of a god, and whenever
religion was mentioned in her
presence, she either shunned the
topic or else plainly said that
it was all old women's nonsense
etc. But now she is very religious,
and she told me that the reason why
she is so changed is because she
has seen the error of her former
manner and attitude towards God.
She told me she has gone through periods
of agony far worse than any I
have been through;-- and that
because of her misery and suffer-
ings she turned to God,-- and [page break]
now she has found solace in
life and faith in living. I wish you
could know her, for she is undoubted-
ly the most brilliant mind in the
family, and is unusually keen +
quick witted, vivacious, quick,
and energetic. She is not the sort
I would consider at all fanatical;
and yet she is deeply religious,
and now prays to God to help the

solution of her problems. More than this, she has found peace, such peace as she has never known. Before I used to think that she intentionally drugged her mind, psychologically speaking, but now I think differently. She told me that the only way for me to conquer this lassitude of mind is to become religious, and to really commune with God. You know, she has been telling me this for a long [page break] time and up to the present. I used to get furious just because her words irritated me, and used to tell her to keep still. But now I am trying her advice, and so far I cannot say how it will work out. I will say this, though, since I tried her advice, I feel a great deal happier, -- as though I no longer am carrying a heavy bundle alone. When I pray now, I am in a receptive mood, so to speak. I cannot explain this to you; but I wish you were here for Mrs. Kung to talk to you. You know becoming more religious has not changed her outward mode of living, because she is just as gay, and goes out to parties etc just as much as before, but [page break] somehow or another, there is a difference in her. She is a great deal less critical, more thoughtful, and not so intolerant of the short comings of others.

In having closer communion with God, the essential feature in faith that the Supreme Being is close to you, and is with you all the time. Such external forms as church worship, or the Bible, etc. are good only in so far as they help you

in getting closer to God. The essential character though is this belief in the all-powerful love of God. I suppose this sounds almost heretical; but this is how I conceive of God. I wish you would try yourself. I have found that the best way to get into close communion with God is to [page break] select a hymn, the meaning of which is exactly what you desire; then read or sing the words till the idea permeates through your consciousness, and you really feel that your mind is ready for communion with God: then pray, as you would talk to your father or with a very close friend. Of course every one has a different way of praying; but to me, this is really the way how I can most strongly feel the presence of God.

You will likely think I have gone crazy; but really Dada, I have tried and tired of everything else. Probably you think I have [lived] "goody-goody" -- but no! I am even this very minute sitting on the verandah outside my room writing you, and smoking a good [page break] cigarette, and enjoying its flavor.

My sister, Mrs. Sun, in Canton is President of the War Relief Society of the Southern Government, and sent me a book to subscribe. I went for her. This morning I went out, and got five hundred dollars. But oh what beastly hot work! I have to go around asking for money, but this fund is for soldiers' families, and I felt I had to do my []. Fortunately I got hold of one of the well-known business-men of the city, the father of one of my friends and made him

take me around to his friends'
offices for two hours. When his
friends learned who I am, they
bowed and scraped; but at first
you might to have seen the way
they looked at me!! Men are
such beasts sometimes! Fortunately I
made his daughter accompany me
too! But no more subscribing for me!

Yours with love-- Daughter [page break]

P.S. It is disgraceful the way I scrawl &
use such huge paper. However I
feel so cramped when I write on
ordinary note paper. Do you mind
such huge sheets,-- & such
scrawls?

I am still keeping on with my
Chinese classes;-- three hours every
[morning] with a tutor(except this
morning.) I am planning of a time
when I shall have sufficient grasp
of the language to translate beautiful,
quaint, or colorful Chinese pieces into
English fiction for you to work on.
Won't it be fun for you & me to have
a lovely house in the country in the
interior of China all to ourselves, and
to collaborate in turning out versions
of all the beautiful in our Chinese
literature? I could translate the
essence and spirit of the master-
pieces, and you could shape them
into form! How would works of [page break]
of [sic] "Wills & Soong" strike you! So
cheer up, -- old dear,--
you and I will have enough
[], color, transparence,
and seething, bubbling, effervescent
shifts and changes after all!

Daughter

30 Seymour Road
6 July, 1921.

Dearest Dada:

Yours of June 5, just received: and I am listening to answer you, because words like everything else are transient and cannot be captured by mere ink. Since I returned home from Canton, I have written you once but need less to say, I have actually started letters more than half a dozen times: but each time I became so distracted, so disheartened that I tore up my efforts.

I agree with you that you & I are in the same boat as far as being self-satisfied is concerned. As to the emptiness of life, — well, life is empty, there is no gain-saying that. And yet looking around and about me, everyone I know, friends, relatives & acquaintances all envy me because they say, I seem to have everything good in life, everything worth having! I have told you all this before, and so you know how I view the matter myself. And then also I am forced to admit that I do seem to have

the richest life of any one of my
friends or acquaintances. Then why in the
name of common sense, am I such an
ingrate, and feel so tired of life?
and feel so keenly the futility of life?

You will probably laugh at what I
am going to tell you. You know I
have tried every mode of life possible
to find happiness, or at least a panacea
from the boredom of existence, within
my environment. I have tried "social
services", "self-improvement", "butterflying",
in fact all the possible ways which
seemed to promise a richer, fuller life.
And I have failed!!

Now I am trying something
new: new at least for me; and so
far I have not tried it sufficiently
to tell whether the end come will be
satisfactory, but such as it is, I
shall tell you.

You know Dada, I am not a
religious person: I am too darned
independent and pert to be meek or

humble or submissive. As you probably
 know too, my sister Mrs. Kurf was
 even more independent than I. She
 is very much keener than I, a
 really brilliant woman, and very
 social, — always has been the
 leading social light up to two or
 three years ago. She even denied the
 existence of a God, and whenever
 religion was mentioned in her
 presence, she either shunned the
 topic or else plainly said that
 it was all old women's nonsense
 etc. But now she is very religious,
 and she told me that the reason why
 she is so changed is, because she
 has seen the error of her former
 manner and attitude towards God.
 She told me she has gone through periods
 of agony far worse than any
 have been through; — and that
 because of her misery and suffer-
 ings she turned to God, — and

now she has found solace in
 life and faith in living. I wish you
 could know her, for she is undoubtedly
 by the most brilliant mind in the
 family, and is unusually keen &
 quick witted, vivacious, quick,
 and energetic. She is not the sort
 I would consider at all fanatical;
 and yet she is deeply religious,
 and now prays to God to help the
 solution of her problems. More than
 this, she has found peace, such
 peace as she has never known.
 Before I used to think that she
 intentionally drugged her mind,
 psychologically speaking; but now
 I think differently. She told us
 that the only way for me to conquer
 this lassitude of mind is to become
 religious, and to really commune
 with God. You know, she has
 been telling me this for a long

time, and up to the present, I
 used to get furious just because
 her words irritated me, and used
 to tell her to keep still. But now
 I am trying her advice, and so
 far I cannot say how it will
 work out. I will say this, though,
 since I tried her advice, I feel
 a great deal happier, — as though
 I no longer am carrying a
 heavy burden alone. When I pray
 now, I am in a receptive
 mood, so to speak. I cannot
 explain this to you; but I wish
 you were here for this. Keep
 to talk to you. You know
 becoming more religious has not
 changed her outward mode of
 living, because she is just as
 gay, and goes out to parties etc
 just as much as before; but

Somehow or another, there is
 a difference in her. She is a
 great deal less critical, more
 thoughtful, and not so intoler-
 ant of the shortcomings of others,
 In having closer communion
 with God, the essential feature
 is faith that this Supreme
 Being is close to you, and is
 with you all the time. Such
 external forms as Church worship,
 & the Bible etc. are good only
 in so far as they help you
 in getting closer to God. The
essential character though is
 this belief in the all-powerful
 love of God. I suppose this sounds
 almost heretical: but this is how
 I conceive of God. I wish you
 would try yourself. I have found
 that the best way to get into
 close communion with God is, &

select a hymn, the meaning of which is exactly what you desire; then read or sing the words till the idea permeates through your consciousness, and you really feel that your mind is ready for communion with God; then pray, as you would talk to your "father" or with a very "close" friend. Of course every one has a different way of praying; but to me, this is really the way how I can most strongly feel the presence of God.

You may likely think I have gone crazy; but really Dada, I have tried and tried of everything else. Probably you think I have turned "Goody-Goody," but no! I am even this very minute sitting on the veranda outside my room writing you, and smoking a good

last night of 8.

cigarette, and enjoying its flavor.

My sister, Mrs. Sumner, is interested
in President of the War Relief Society
of the Southern Government, and sent
me a book she subscribed for

her. This morning I went out, and
got five hundred dollars. But oh
what heartily hot work! I hate
to go around asking for money, but
this fund is for soldiers' families, &
I felt I had to do my bit. Fortunately
I got hold of one of the well-known
business men of the city, the father
of one of my friends & made him
take me around to his friends'
offices for two hours. When his
friends learned who I am, they
bowed & scraped; but at first
you might have seen the way
they looked at me!! Men are
such beasts sometimes! Fortunately I
made his daughter accompany me
too! But no more subscribing for me!
Yours with love & day after.

P.D.
 It is disgraceful the way I scrawl &
 use such huge paper. However
 feel so cramped when I write on
 ordinary note paper. Do you mind
 such huge sheets, — & such
 scrawls?

I am still keeping on with my
 Chinese Classics:— three hours every
 morning with a tutor (except this
 morning!) I am planning of a Term
 when I shall have sufficient grasp
 on the language to translate beautiful
 quaint & colorful Chinese poems into
 English. Fiction for you to work on.
 Wouldn't it be fun for you & me to have
 a lovely house in the country in the
 interior of China all to ourselves, and
 to collaborate in turning out versions
 of all the beautiful in our Chinese
 literature? I could translate the
 essence and spirit of the master-
 pieces, and you could shape them
 into form! How would works of

of "Wills & Soong" strike you! So

Cheer up. — old dear.

you and I will have enough
 motion, color, transparency,
 and settling, bubbling, effervescent
 shifts and changes after all!

Day after